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October 10, 2017

BY ECFS

Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Requests for Temporary Enhanced Lifeline Support in Puerto Rico
and the U.S. Virgin Islands; WC Docket Nos. 09-197, 11-42, 10-90**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Boomerang Wireless, LLC d/b/a enTouch Wireless (Boomerang) and Global Connection, Inc. of America (Global Connection) (collectively, the Companies), by and through the undersigned counsel, hereby submit this letter in support of the emergency petition of Telrite Corporation asking the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) to “immediately make available a recovery package to Lifeline subscribers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands up to \$25 per month of enhanced federal [Universal Service Fund (USF)] support for a six-month period.”¹ The Companies also respond herein to similar requests submitted by PRWireless, Inc. d/b/a Open Mobile for relief in Puerto Rico² and several affiliated companies operating under the Viya brand seeking relief in the U.S. Virgin Islands.³

The Telrite Petition is a reasonable approach to providing “targeted relief [that] will help low-income consumers ... to jump start efforts to reconnect to family, government services, and jobs”⁴ in Puerto Rico in the wake of the unprecedented destruction caused by Hurricanes Irma

¹ Telrite Corporation Emergency Petition, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., 10 (filed Oct. 6, 2017) (Telrite Petition).

² Emergency Petition for Waiver and Other Relief, CC Docket No. 96-45 et al., 11 (filed Oct. 4, 2017) (Open Mobile Petition).

³ Emergency Petition, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., 10 (filed Oct. 5, 2017) (Viya Petition).

⁴ Telrite Petition at 5.

Marlene Dortch
October 10, 2017
Page Two

and Maria last month. Boomerang and Global Connection further agree that because the primary purpose of the proposed enhanced support would be to promote affordability, the temporary enhanced support should be “conditioned upon the [eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC)] providing to these subscribers enhanced voice and data offerings similar to those offers provided on Tribal lands.”⁵ Boomerang and Global Connection are prepared to offer enhanced Lifeline plans to their Lifeline subscribers in Puerto Rico.

Unlike the Telrite Petition, Open Mobile and Viya would limit the availability of the enhanced support to subscribers of facilities-based ETCs.⁶ As Telrite explained, such a limitation “would serve only to benefit facilities-based ETCs by creating an unfair competitive advantage, and would needlessly exclude hundreds of thousands of eligible Lifeline subscribers of wireless resellers who are equally in need of such relief as the subscribers of facilities-based ETCs.”⁷ Indeed, based on their own extensive experience in providing Lifeline service, including to eligible consumers in Puerto Rico, and in Boomerang’s case, providing Lifeline service on Tribal lands, Boomerang and Global can confirm that “wireless resellers play a vital role providing wireless Lifeline service to low-income Americans.”⁸ The Open Mobile Petition further suggests that rather than using the enhanced support to promote affordability for Lifeline-eligible consumers, it will direct those resources towards rebuilding its network in Puerto Rico.⁹ Telrite correctly notes that “[t]he Lifeline program rules do not permit such use of its funds.”¹⁰

⁵ *Id.* at 8.

⁶ *See* Open Mobile Petition at 11; Viya Petition at 10.

⁷ Telrite Petition at 7. Open Mobile and Viya claim that the enhanced support they are seeking “is equivalent to” the enhanced Lifeline support for eligible subscribers residing on Tribal lands, and that the primary purpose of the enhanced Tribal Lifeline program was to promote infrastructure deployment. Open Mobile Petition at 12; *see also* Viya Petition at 10. However, as explained in the Telrite Petition and in Boomerang’s previous comments to the Commission, the Commission’s main objective for the enhanced Tribal Lifeline program is to promote affordability, not infrastructure deployment. *See* Telrite Petition at 6, citing *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service et al.*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Twelfth Report and Order, Memorandum Opinion and Order, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 00-208, ¶ 44 (2000); Comments of Boomerang Wireless, LLC on the Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Modernize and Restructure the Lifeline Program, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., 9-12 (filed Aug. 31, 2015) (Boomerang Comments).

⁸ Telrite Petition at 6. As Boomerang noted in comments to the Commission in 2015, “[h]aving network coverage is not enough. The carrier has to actually provide outreach services to serve low-income consumers residing on Tribal lands. Resellers, like Boomerang, have demonstrated that desire by investing in the licensing, coordination, and marketing outreach efforts needed to serve Tribal customers.” Boomerang Comments at 10.

⁹ Telrite Petition at 7.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 8, n. 28.

Marlene Dortch
October 10, 2017
Page Three

Therefore, the Commission should reject the Open Mobile and Viya proposals, and instead grant “Telrite’s consumer-focused and competitively neutral proposal”¹¹ to make available to *all* eligible Lifeline subscribers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands up to an additional \$25 per month of enhanced Lifeline support for six months, conditioned upon the ETC providing to these subscribers enhanced voice and data offerings similar to those offers provided on Tribal lands.

In addition, Boomerang and Global Connection agree with Telrite’s position on Viya’s request for a one-time \$30 handset credit for Lifeline subscribers in the U.S. Virgin Islands.¹² Indeed, ETCs, including Boomerang and Global Connection, “will be required to replace a significant number of handsets that were lost or damaged as a result of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.”¹³ Such replacements will be equally prevalent in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Thus, if the Commission is inclined to grant Viya’s request, the \$30 handset credit should be made available in both territories, and should not be dependent upon whether a subscriber receives Lifeline service from a facilities-based ETC or a reseller. Finally, as the Telrite Petition advised, “in order to ensure that the handset credit funds are disbursed responsibly, Lifeline subscribers seeking such credit should be required to submit to ETCs a written attestation that their handset was either lost or damaged as a result of the recent storms.”¹⁴

Please contact the undersigned should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



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enTouch Wireless and Global Connection, Inc.
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¹¹ *Id.* at 6.

¹² *See* Viya Petition at 10.

¹³ Telrite Petition at 2, n. 5.

¹⁴ *Id.*